

Early Learning Advisory Council (ELAC) Meeting Minutes

June 23, 2014 – 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Dumas Bay Centre, Federal Way

Welcome & Introductions

- Kathy Goebel, Co-Chair and Bette Hyde, Department of Early Learning (DEL) Director welcomed all attendees and asked everyone to introduce themselves.
 - Bette introduced Greg Williamson, DEL's new Assistant Director of Partnerships and Collaboration.
 - Sam Whiting, Thrive by Five Washington President & CEO, introduced Angus Mairs, Thrive's new Deputy Director and Kristin Wiggins, Thrive's Policy and Advocacy Consultant.
- The April 14, 2014 meeting minutes were approved.

ELAC Reflection, Community Agreements & Two-way Communication Protocol

- Kathy provided an overview of the feedback and recommended improvements to ELAC operations from the survey and reflections, including:
 - Continue meeting activities that support participation & engagement, such as small group/large group discussions.
 - Limit the number of topics for each meeting to allow time for discussion. Consider this when developing next ELAC work plan.
 - Include Community Agreements on each meeting agenda, and co-chairs take time at the beginning of each meeting to remind participants, so all input is responded to respectfully.
 - Seek input early, so there's time to get stakeholder responses prior to decision being made. Send requests as soon as possible after ELAC meetings for discussion topics for following meeting.
- Evette Jasper, DEL State/Local Coordination Program Manager, noted that the Two-Way Communication Protocol committee is seeking additional input from the Coalitions and from ELAC during the Coalition Dialogue discussion, so they will recommend changes at the August 18 ELAC meeting. She also reviewed the proposed [Community Agreements](#) for ELAC that will guide how the Council will work together.

Conclusion	<p>ELAC adopted the following proposed Community Agreements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Choose to be present and engaged as a representative of your constituencies ○ Listen actively to understand and be open to all voices, perspectives and outcomes ○ Tell the truth and assume good intentions ○ Be willing to have brave and sometimes messy conversations ○ Respect different learning, engagement and communication styles
Next Steps	<p>The approved Community Agreements will be featured on the top of each meeting agenda.</p>

Family Partnerships and Engagement

Parents, Families & Caregivers (#15, 18, 20, 21)

- Judy King, DEL Strengthening Families WA Administrator, provided an overview of purpose, history and process of developing a family partnership and engagement strategy for DEL. She reviewed what DEL learned from [the Parent Focus Group](#) meeting and facilitated a discussion on the following questions:
 1. How can the Parent Advisory Group (PAG) inform and connect with ELAC?
 2. What are other ideas/successful strategies for partnering and engaging with families that are not currently reflected in the proposed structure?
 3. Should the PAG become a subcommittee of ELAC?

Discussion	<p>1. How can the Parent Advisory Group (PAG) inform and connect with ELAC?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Use current parent representatives on ELAC as connectors. ▪ Provide very specific and meaningful asks for advice from the PAG. Questions for ELAC should also go to the PAG. ▪ Be intentional about timing, so both the community and parents are heard. ▪ Connect the PAG with the Early Learning Regional Coalitions with clear roles. Structure needs to ensure local access, so the PAG represents perspective of families in communities and to have a local implementation lens. ▪ Support Coalitions in strengthening parent voice and participation. ▪ Ensure PAG is open to more families, so the same people are not being selected. When asking for experience and qualifications, ensure questions are framed, so families won't self-select out. ▪ Relationships and trust are key to building strong family engagement. Coalitions have built these relationships in their communities and should have a role in identifying PAG participants. ▪ Important to have a skilled and knowledgeable facilitator to connect families to emerging needs. <p>2. What are other ideas/successful strategies for partnering and engaging with families that are not currently reflected in the proposed structure?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Go to families where they are and use existing groups (i.e. PTA, play & learn, Strengthening Families parent education, communities of faith, ECEAP/HS policy councils, schools, etc.) Tap into these groups to request input using a rapid response system. ▪ Parent engagement is a prime place for coalitions to be involved. Instead of DEL convening community-based conversations, funding can through the Community Momentum grants to the Regional Coalitions to staff and use their expertise. ▪ Work with individuals and groups who already have the relationships with the parents instead of sending an unfamiliar face to translate or ask for feedback. ▪ Being intentional about working with families, so the relationship is not just one way. Support them with mentoring and skill-building and hubs for resources. ▪ Have a system of communicating with feedback loops, so families know the impact of their efforts. <p>3. Should the Parent Advisory Group become a subcommittee of ELAC?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ It's important to mentor and build skills with parents prior to asking them to participate. ▪ Two different structure ideas: 1. Having a 23 (+/-) member model at DEL; or 2. Charging the Regional Coalitions with gathering input and involving parents
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	<p>within their community.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Coalition capacity to reach unaffiliated parents varies. ▪ Caution adding this work for the Coalitions without adequate support. Often the coalitions have funding requirements, but the amount of funding doesn't cover the cost of carrying out the work. ▪ It's important to hold the intention of parents having avenues to directly impact programs and policies. ▪ The time frame for putting the PAG structure in place depends on ELAC and DEL leadership's input. ▪ The Council wants to see more detailed proposals and an implementation plan for PAG as a subcommittee before making a recommendation.
Conclusion	ELAC voted to postpone making a recommendation as to whether the PAG should be a subcommittee of ELAC until DEL brings proposals for the PAG structure and implementation, including: role, goals, timeline, cost, mentoring, membership and coordination with ELAC and Regional Coalitions.
Next Steps	Judy and team will attend the August meeting and provide structure and implementation proposals.

Public Awareness

Systems & Communities (#35)

- Amy Blondin, DEL Government and Community Relations Manager, introduced ELAC's work plan item of creating focused goals and strategies to strengthen public awareness and community support for early learning. She provided a compilation of current [Public Awareness Efforts](#) across the state and led a discussion on the following questions:
 1. What's our common definition of public awareness?
 2. What does ELAC want to raise awareness about and who is the audience? (Importance of early learning generally? A specific program, service, topic or initiative?)

Discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ DEL and Child Care Aware (CCA) should have a user friendly phone app, so information is easily accessible to families. Love.Talk.Play and Vroom both have apps and focus on what parents can do to support early development. ▪ Not all families have a smartphone, so traditional methods are also important, such as postcards and print materials in different languages. ▪ Public awareness is explaining issues and disseminating information, so people can make decisions for themselves. ▪ Important to have public awareness on the work plan because it helps define ELAC's role as a hub between state and local partners. ▪ Voters appreciate a return on their investment, so we need a mechanism to inform and reach key leaders and decision makers in communities. Messages need to be consistent, yet tailored to specific audiences and inspire support and advocacy for early learning. ▪ We could use the PBS series, Raising of America as a public awareness opportunity to start a broader conversation about the importance of quality early learning opportunities and how to support DEL and partner efforts. The public should hear more early learning success stories, just as they do for graduations or retirements.
Conclusion	ELAC members and Regional Advisors volunteered to serve on a public awareness work group to plan ELAC's public awareness efforts: Lois Martin, Dee Hirsch, Bob Butts, Rebecca Timmen, Jen Ross, and Susan Barbeau (as a liaison to KBTC Public Television.)

Next Steps	The Public Awareness Committee will meet and provide recommendations at the October meeting.
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DEL Agency-Request Legislation

- Heather Moss, DEL Deputy Director, and Amy Blondin, presented DEL's initial proposals for legislative requests for the 2015 session.

Discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ DEL wants to make sure ELAC and other partners have buy-in for the agency's legislative requests, so everyone shares and hears one message. One question the agency is trying to answer is whether funding for early learning qualifies for adequate funding for basic education under the McCleary decision. ▪ DEL will be requesting primarily new and some continued funding for the 2015-17 biennium budget: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP) expansion ○ Early Achievers ○ Early Start Act ○ Home Visiting ○ Early Support for Infants and Toddlers (ESIT) ○ Reach Out and Read ○ DEL Tribal Liaison ▪ There are cost estimates for Early Achievers as both voluntary and mandatory for providers. DEL's working to budget for 12-month eligibility for child care subsidies through the caseload forecasting, so that will not be part of the agency's budget ask ▪ The budget request for the Early Start Act will include the additional supports for providers. ▪ WaKIDS funding comes from Race to the Top, the Gates Foundation and the state. DEL and OSPI are discussing who will ask for state funding. ▪ More information about the next version of the Early Start Act will likely come out in late July. ▪ Along with the budget, DEL will also be making policy requests, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ ECEAP programs over 4-hours exemption from licensing ○ Electronic time & attendance for subsidy (make this mandatory, or should centers still be able to use paper/pencil for sign in/out?) ○ Clean-up the ESIT statute ○ Use portable background checks for ECEAP ○ Codify Early Achievers into DEL's statute (tried to do this a few sessions ago – HB 2559) ▪ DEL cannot ask to expand ELAC membership to include Regional Coalition representatives, but partners can make the request. ▪ If the 4-hour exemption goes to 6 ½, there needs to be clear communication to providers, so they understand why ECEAP programs are exempt from licensing. Any ECEAP program that provides the 10-hour extended day must be licensed. Issues with being licensed arise for programs in school district facilities. DEL doesn't want to give the impression that ECEAP gets a pass. This won't be as much of an issue once we show that the ECEAP standards align with licensing. ▪ Families do not want to be singled out for using child care subsidies, so the electronic time and attendance system should allow everyone to participate, not just families on subsidy. Some providers may not have the capacity to
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	<p>utilize this system because of access to the internet, language barriers, etc.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Making all Early Achievers participation mandatory for all providers will knock providers out of the system and limits choices for families, especially since small centers are hesitant to join.
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Public Comment

Discussion	<p>There is a lot to consider if moving towards a mandatory electronic time and attendance system. What happens if parents have a different caregiver pick up their child who doesn't have a card? Providers that serve primarily teen parents would face barriers with parents forgetting to bring their cards.</p>
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LUNCH and ELAC Expiring Members Recognition

- Bette Hyde recognized the ELAC Members whose terms expire on June 30, 2014.
 - RaShelle Davis
 - Kathy Goebel
 - Dee Hirsch
 - Jennifer Jennings-Shaffer
 - Cynthia Juarez
 - Lois Martin
 - Nelly Mbajah
 - Gene Sharratt
 - Rebecca Timmen
- Bette also recognized Regional Advisors whose 1-year terms expire in June.
 - Susan Barbeau
 - Samantha Bowen
 - Rhodes Lockwood
 - Nancy Spurgeon
 - Dan Teuteberg
- Kathy mentioned that updates from state, partner agencies and each of the 10 Early Learning Regional Coalitions were included in the meeting packets, and the updates include contact information for any questions.
 - [ELAC State & Partner Agency Updates](#)
 - [Early Learning Regional Coalition Updates](#)

Regional Coalition Dialogue

- Enrica Hampton, Regional Advisor of SOAR, King County, provided an overview on the intent of the [Two-way Communication Protocol](#) and gathered input using the following questions to help guide future Coalition Dialogues:
 1. Does anything need to be added to the current definition of Coalition Dialogues? Does anything need to be changed?
 2. What would you like to gain from a Coalition Dialogue?
 3. What ideas do you have for bringing forward community feedback to ELAC?
 4. What can we do differently to engage and encourage discussion in this process?
 5. How will information from these Coalition Dialogues help to inform recommendations and decisions made by ELAC?

Discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Coalition dialogues should be planned around ELAC's work plan priorities, so the work is aligned. Coalitions can frame their community feedback based on doing a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) analysis. Bring forward voices from the field in a respectful and targeted way, and be
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	<p>specific about any requests.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Topics should be meaningful and recognize Coalitions as a huge resource of knowledge about the field. Time should be used to think collaboratively about solving problems instead of just providing feedback on issues. For example, many issues would have been resolved early on if Coalitions were involved in developing the WaKIDS transition form from the beginning. ▪ Topics should be relevant, timely and inform action. RA's can get support from DEL on figuring out conversation topics. ▪ Partners in ELAC would like to know more about the Coalitions to participate in their activities and be supportive, including meeting times, membership and goals. Where do they meet? Who participates? What are the goals? What non-DEL or Thrive funded initiatives are happening in regions? Then can help do outreach and get folks involved. Highlight 1-2 regions per meeting. ▪ Use existing communications channels, for example OSPI communications to the Educational Service Districts (ESD). Coalitions could also receive the information or participate in monthly calls, so folks can think about how they'd like to be involved. ▪ Getting better at two-way communication with RA involvement. RA's need to provide feedback to DEL on what hearing about any initiative. Topics should be related to the ELAC work plan, but there also needs to be a better way for Coalitions to raise emerging issues then provide DEL time to come up with genuine response. ▪ Add to the definition, circle back on how DEL and Washington Early Learning Partnership initiatives are playing out on the local level and how to support solutions to challenges. ▪ Convene ELAC meetings in different parts of the state, so Coalition members can be heard as part of the public.
Next Steps	The Regional Advisors will discuss input on the coalition dialogues during their monthly call and make recommendations to ELAC.

Preschool Expansion

Children (#12, 13)

- Juliet Morrison, DEL Assistant Director of Quality Practice & Professional Growth Division, provided an update on Preschool Expansion.
 1. DEL received many applications for the additional 1,350 ECEAP slots for the 2014-15 school year and scored the applications with the help of partners. Every single application was reviewed by three people: an ECEAP specialist, another DEL staff and an external partner. Fifteen percent were prioritized for tribal and rural providers, and we believe we'll exceed that goal. We will release information on the selected contractors in the near future. It was wonderful to read about all the services being offered around the state. Although we were not able to grant slots to every applicant, more are coming, and it was great to see such enthusiasm. Having this information and moving towards full-day preschool sets the state up well to compete for the federal preschool grant. DEL will convene an operational workgroup to think through preschool expansion starting in August, and we would love to have an ELAC member participate in the workgroup. The group will focus on how to align with evidence-based curriculum and how to sustain family support services.

Discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ All of the programs funded were for 6 hours or more. Moving forward DEL will prioritize full-day, but no slots will be left on the table if they aren't full day.
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ There are some parents who are only interested in 4 hour days, even though the research shows that full day leads to better child outcomes. DEL will be looking for input from families as well. ▪ There will be several ways DEL will get feedback during the federal preschool grant application process, including reaching out to ELAC and Regional Coalitions. The application timeframe is typically six weeks, and we know what our federal partners tend to look for in successful applications. It will be very competitive because we're going up against states that are Race to the Top grantees and already have longstanding state-funding preschool programs.
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Washington Kindergarten Inventory of Developing Skills (WaKIDS)

Schools (#28)

- Dan Torres, Thrive by Five Washington Community Partnerships Manager, provided an overview of the [Draft WaKIDS Regional ELC Self Reflection Tool](#). Each coalition gets funding through the Community Momentum grant to facilitate the early learning collaboration component of WaKIDS, and Coalitions have a steering committee that leads the work. The self-reflection tool is intended to help the Coalitions gauge where they are and help them move their efforts forward. The roles of school districts were left out, so ELAC's insights on this.

Discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Every school is supposed to identify an EL Coordinator, but they are not mandated. State-funded full-day Kindergarten (FDK) districts are required to build early learning connections, however what that means has not been clarified. OSPI may provide minimum requirements. Some districts are unaware of the requirement. ▪ Some ideas for incentives and encouragement from OSPI include stating in the annual FDK memo that OSPI will be paying more attention, and at minimum districts should have at least one WaKIDS early learning collaboration convening. OSPI and Coalitions can provide examples, tools and resources for making connections along with a list of early learning providers within districts. ▪ OSPI can put early learning contacts, and what's going on in communities on the OSPI website. CCA provides information on all principals and providers in catchment areas on their website. ▪ Building long-term relationships between early learning providers and school districts is not a race. Coalitions that are doing this well have been at it for a long time. Coalitions need to have a shared focus or hook that all partners are passionate about and make it about what's best for the kids. In the northwest it's parallel professional development between early learning providers and Kindergarten teachers around early literacy. Sometimes the work has to be building by building, and many are resistant for a long time. We have one district that has finally engaged after 3 years of asking. ▪ Maybe there can be a separate self-reflection tool for districts to help them see what's possible. Examples of districts that collaborate well include Coupeville and South Whidbey.
Next Steps	<p>There was interest in continuing the conversation on sharing ideas and guidance for encouraging and building school district participation in the WaKIDS early learning collaborations. The agenda for August includes many work plan topics, but there may be space to add this topic.</p> <p>Dan encouraged the Council to contact him or Bob Butts with more input over the</p>

	next few weeks.
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ELAC Co-Chair Election

- Kathy Goebel mentioned that the plan was to vote on a new co-chair, and the Executive Committee is excited to nominate Nelly Mbajah. However, Nelly was unable to join the meeting, and will share a personal statement at the August meeting, so the vote will be postponed.

Meeting Follow-up

- Kathy Goebel reflected on the meeting and referred to the [2014 ELAC Work Plan](#) topics covered during the day and what to expect for August 18.

Conclusion	Topics to cover during the August 18 meeting in addition to the work plan topics include: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Family Partnerships & Engagement• DEL Agency-Request Legislation• ELAC-RA Two-way Communication Protocol• ELAC Co-Chair Election
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Closing Remarks & Adjourn

- The next regular meeting is scheduled for **August 18th, 2014** from 9 a.m. – 3 p.m., at the Lacey Community Center

ELAC MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE

Bob Butts – Assistant Superintendent for Early Learning, Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction
RaShelle Davis – Early Learning Policy Advisory, Governor’s Executive Policy Office
Kathy Goebel – Policy Associate, State Board for Community & Technical Colleges
Dee Hirsch – Program and Admissions Director, Discovery Montessori School
Dr. Bette Hyde – Director, Department of Early Learning
Jennifer Jennings-Shaffer *on behalf of* Leslie Dozono – Early Learning Policy Director, Children’s Alliance
Cynthia Juarez – Early Learning Director, ESD 105
Lois Martin – Director, Community Day Center for Children, Inc.
Anne Messerly *on behalf of* Gene Sharratt – Executive Director, Washington Student Achievement Council
Jennifer Ross – Parent
Karen Walker – ESIT Program Administrator, Department of Early Learning
Sam Whiting – President & Chief Executive Officer, Thrive by Five Washington

ELAC MEMBERS ABSENT

Bianca Bailey – Parent & Parent Advisory Group Member, Department of Early Learning
Luba Bezborodnikova – Associate Superintendent for Early Learning, Puget Sound ESD
Senator Annette Cleveland – Washington State Senate
Representative Jessyn Farrell – Washington State House of Representatives
Representative Larry Haler – Washington State House of Representatives
Nelly Mbajah – Early Childhood Development Program Manager, Department of Social & Health Services
Jeromy Sullivan – Port Gamble S’Klallam Tribe Chairman
Rebecca Timmen – Project LAUNCH State/Early Childhood Coordination Systems Coordinator, DOH
Lisa Webb – Family Child Care Provider
VACANT – Project Manager, HSSCO, Department of Early Learning
VACANT – Washington State Senate

REGIONAL ADVISORS (RA) IN ATTENDANCE

Susan Barbeau – First 5 FUNdamentals of Pierce County
Samantha Bowen – Southeast
Enrica Hampton – SOAR, King County
Karri Livingston – Investing in Children: Coalition Central
Julia Danskin *on behalf of* Rhodes Lockwood – Olympic-Kitsap Peninsulas
Wilanne Ollila-Perry – Northwest
Nancy Spurgeon – North Central
Sandra Szambelan – Inland Northwest Early Learning Alliance, Northeast
Dan Teuteberg – Visions for Early Learning, West Central
Jodi Wall – Southwest Washington Early Learning (SWEL)